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INFORMATION

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Foreword

OF UNUSUAL interest and importance is the announcement to be found in this issue of The Digest of the Canadian release of "The Imperial Eight," series of British International Pictures Ltd. features. The tremendous strides made by the English producers in the past year in turning out high grade feature pictures is the talk of the Film Industry.

England is now attaining a position in the production of high grade features which is second to no other country in the world. No better evidence of this is required than the fact that British International pictures are being regularly shown in many of the de luxe theatres of the United States and that one of the leading Broadway, New York, theatres is devoted exclusively to the showing of these British pictures.

Canada stands to benefit more from the great improvement in British pictures than our neighbors to the south, for every exhibitor knows that there is a growing demand on the part of theatre-goers in the Dominion for British-made pictures. The daily press carry stories reflecting this public interest.

The "Imperial Eight" will meet this demand by providing feature pictures of a standard equal to the best made anywhere in the world.

Here are some brief descriptions of the eight feature pictures that make up "The Imperial Eight" series:

"Murder"

A mystery story that is absorbingly interesting and deeply mystifying. It is taken from the fast selling novel of the same name and was a huge success as a stage play.

"Young Woodley"

Pre-released at the Uptown Theatre, Toronto, where it played to packed houses. The dramatic critic of the Toronto Star, in a column write-up, said: "The year is still very young, but even at this early stage in the game I am going to nominate 'Young Woodley' as the best picture of the year, and then sit back and wait for some one to topple it off the pedestal—if they can."

"The Middle Watch"

This picture was chosen by a unanimous vote of all the English producers for showing at the special screening held for the Premiers in attendance at the recent Imperial Conference in London. The entire action takes place aboard a British warship. It is a delightful comedy-drama.

"Suspense"

A picturization of the successful stage play of the same name. Critics have pronounced it "an epic of the rank and file of the army." Its strength is considerable, and at the same time there is a vein of real humor all through the production.

"The Man From Chicago"

The New York Film Daily says: "This British production handles a clever murder mystery with a lot of class in directing and acting. The story particularly is commendable, for it is full of surprise twists and a lot of baffling clues to mislead and keep the interest as to the eventual outcome always on edge."

"The W Plan"

From the famous novel by Graham Seton. A spy story that is entirely out of the ordinary. It is thrilling, romantic and interest-compelling.

"Night Birds"

The London Times' critic says: "At each stage there is some fresh excitement . . . The detective-sergeant is all but pinned to the wall of a night club by a knife from nowhere—and all the while he is delighting us with a personality that is as much the secret of the film's success as the thrills it so deftly produces."

"The Yellow Mask"

A musical melodrama with much "fast action" with which is interspersed catchy music. Here is something new in the way of a thriller, and it is going to go over big everywhere.

Regal Films Limited, Canadian distributors for British International Pictures Ltd., announces that "The Imperial Eight" is ready for immediate booking; and that prints of the entire series are now in all its exchanges, where they will be screened for exhibitors who are interested.

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Editor and Managing Director

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Combines Act Confirmed



THE BRITISH Privy Council on January 29th, rendered a judgment of tremendous importance, not only to the Film Industry of Canada, but that involving film interests of the world.

It means that the plans for a world-film monopoly, by certain interests, must go "by the board," for not being able to "close the door," of the British Empire under a World Film Combine arrangement; it upsets "The Apple Cart" of the world-film monopolists, without the aid of Bernard Shaw.

The British Privy Council has pronounced the Combines Investigation Act of Canada valid, and has also upheld Section 498 of the Canadian Criminal Code.

Both of these Acts had been challenged by the Attorneys-General of the Province of Ontario and Quebec, and the P. A. T. A. (Proprietary Articles Trade Association). The appeal from the judgment of the Supreme Court of Canada has been dismissed, and Ontario can now proceed with the prosecution of the members of alleged combines in the electrical contracting trade, and the plumbing trade, etc.

Other investigations concern the Famous Players Canadian Corp., and subsidiaries, the Paramount-Publix of Canada, etc., etc.

The Hon. W. H. Price, Attorney-General for Ontario, made a press statement that, "All cases which were being prosecuted under the Combines Act will continue immediately."

Senator Gideon Robertson, Minister of Labor, from whose department was ordered the investigation of the Famous Players Canadian Corp., and subsidiaries, with its recent widening of the scope of the investigation to include the operation of the Distributors Association, and the Film Boards of Trade in Canada, stated to the press: "I have more profound admiration than ever before for the sagacity of the Privy Council. The effect of this decision will be entirely beneficial."

The decision of the Privy Council establishes the validity of Canada's Anti-Combines legislation beyond any further question as to its power to act. It maintains the validity of the Combines Act as passed at Ottawa in 1923. It classifies as a crime, a trade combine which operates to the detriment of public interest.

The Government of Canada, under a Commission of Investigation of which Mr. Peter White, K.C., is Commissioner, is now investigating the Famous Players Canadian Corp., and subsidiaries, under the Combines Act.



RAV



RAV LEWIS

PRESENTS

IN VIEW of the fact that 1930-31 presents the first determined effort on the part of a British producing company to obtain a market for its product in Canada, it is of importance to mention a few facts in connection with the British International Pictures, the company to which we refer, who this company is, its affiliations, its program, and the position it enjoys in the British Film Industry, and the Industry of Films in general.

The B. I. P. has its producing studios at Elstree, England. The company was founded by its present chairman, Mr. John Maxwell, and commenced business on March 31st, 1927, with a share capital of approximately \$250,000.

I931 finds the B. I. P., and its subsidiary companies representing an aggregate share and loan capital of \$25,000,000, approximately. It further constitutes a complete entertainment industry in itself, its activities covering every department of production, distribution, and exhibition, together with exploitation.

After the founding of the company, the studios at Elstree were acquired, and represent a plant and equipment capital investment of close to two million dollars approximately.

THE INTRODUCTION of Talking Pictures enabled British International to establish two records, it led the film world in the introduction of multi-lingual pictures, and it was the first British producing company which undertook the production of British Talking Pictures. The first British talking feature was "Blackmail," which started into production at Elstree in March, 1929; and which proved that B. I. P. would take an important place in the production of British Talking Pictures.

"Atlantic" was the first multi-lingual picture made. It was produced at Elstree, with three distinct casts, English, German, and French, each cast achieving a distinct success; and making "Atlantic," a feature of world-wide distribution and film fame.

PRODUCTION at Elstree has carried on continuously since the opening of the studios, as many as seven pictures being in the process of production at the same period, although the normal rate of producing activity is retained on a basis of from three to four pictures in production simultaneously. The total number of pictures which the British International has produced numbers to date fifty-six.

There are 100 employees at Elstree, excluding artists. The year ending March 31st, 1930, recorded an employment of 14,344 artists. The subsidiary companies include the A. B. C. Ltd., which has 3,000 employees, the Wardour Films limited., with its 185 employees.

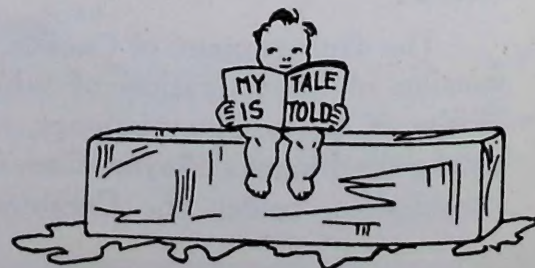
THE A. B. C. LIMITED, is the Associated British Cinemas Limited, a British chain of theatres which has an authorized capital of ten million dollars. It was founded in 1928, with a group of forty theatres, and this number has now grown to 120 theatres in active operation. The A. B. C. theatres are located in key centres throughout Great Britain; and have among their number some of the finest theatres in England. The aggregate seating capacity of these theatres number 165,000, and during the last five months of 1930, the average weekly admission to these theatres exceeded 1,250,000. On this basis of calculation, the yearly admissions would reach approximately 65,000,000.

The distribution is taken care of through another subsidiary company, the Wardour Films Ltd., with headquarters at Film House, Wardour Street West. Wardour Films Ltd., which not only distributes the output of British International Pictures, Ltd., but is the distributing agency for the UFA of Germany. This company is under the management of Mr. Arthur Dent, one of the directors of the B. I. P. Branch offices are in operation in all the principal distributing centres, Glasgow, Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, Cardiff, Westgate, Liverpool, and Belfast.

DURING 1930, Wardour Films Ltd., has done business for British International Pictures, with 3,000 of the 3,500 cinemas in the United Kingdom, the turnover, since the introduction of Talking Pictures having increased to the extent of 100%.

British International Pictures are also distributed through another subsidiary, the First National-Pathe, Ltd., of which company, B. I. P. secured a controlling interest in July, 1928. First National-Pathe Ltd., mainly distributes the important productions of First National Pictures Inc., of U.S.A., and the B. I. P. productions covered by the Quota requirements.

THE DIRECTORS of B. I. P. are John Maxwell, Chairman; Sir Clement Kinloch-Cooke, Bart., K.B.E.; Jerome Denny Bright; William Scrimgeour; Maurice Arthur Dent; John Court Appleby Thorpe.



The New Film on Broadway

By Betty Ross

"REDUCING," a Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer production. Featuring Marie Dressler and Polly Moran.

The screen's contagious comedienne whose recent co-starring effort, "Caught Short," took the world by storm, are to be seen together again in "Reducing," a "talkie" that is simply throwing the audience out of its seats in the Broadway theatre where it is appearing.

Add to these two luminaries, such a pair of scintillating beauties as Sally Eilers and Anita Paige, and two irresistible young men like Buster Collier and William Bakewell, the latter last seen in "All Quiet on the Western Front," and meek looking Lucien Littlefield as the husband of the barging Miss Dressler, and if all these juicy black birds do not make a most successful pie, we can't think of anything that would.

Polly Moran is a very elegant and "toney" lady who owns a beauty parlor. To her great discomfiture, along comes her fat and embarrassing country cousin, entangled with a handful of brats always underfoot and makes herself at home in the beauty parlor. To see Miss Dressler get mixed up with electric apparati, mud baths and women trapping cabinets is to laugh yourself into such a state of weakness as to be hardly able to rise and leave the theatre at the end.

For a stimulant and tonic, don't fail to see "Reducing."

* * * *

"HOW HE LIED TO HER HUSBAND," a British International production. Directed by Cecil Lewis, from the play by George Bernard Shaw.

Here at last is the first audible film of the long-wooded-by-cinema-directors Bernard Shaw. This film was directed in the presence of G. B. S., which may account for the nervous happiness of the three featured players, Robert Harris, Vera Lennox, and Edmund Gwenn. The entire scene takes place in a parlor, with occasional glimpses into the hall, and the characters are costumed in Victorian dress.

The crisp, sparkling, witty dialogue is Shaw, and although the picture lags at times from lack of action and change of sets, nevertheless, it is hailed as an auspicious advent into the audible films. For undoubtedly Mr. Shaw permitted this less-important of his works to be filmed to see what would happen to his brain-children in this process. At the Elstree studios, this is interpreted as a sign that he will soon permit his better known plays to be adapted to the screen, and in view of the fact that the motion picture is improved by movement (which this particular film lacks), Mr. Shaw might even consent to rational changes, as long as they are not unnecessary or silly, in the filming of his other plays.

"How He Lied to Her Husband" may not take its place among thrillers or hot-moments of the cinema, but by all means it deserves a visit as a study of G. B. S. in his new "movie" mood.

* * * *

"THE BAT WHISPERS," from the stage production, "The Bat," by Mary Roberts Rinehart and Avery Hopwood. Directed by Roland West. Featuring Chester Morris.

One of the spectacular features employed in picturizing this former stage thriller, is the employment of double-width film, which serves to give the actors a lot of space and presents scenes and setting in their entirety.

Unusually magnificent is the complete view of a city, with the grandeur of its skyscrapers rearing their heads to heaven. The ordinary sized film could never have accomplished this.

Chester Morris does unusually excellent work in a difficult role as private detective on the trail of The Bat. The Bat is a mysterious masquerader who plunders and kills in the night. A bank president has sublet his home to a family and among them, in this home, the Bat concentrates his activities. When the bank is robbed, and its president presumably in Europe, the tenants who robbed his home have a feverish time of it. At length the Bat is caught.

This is a spine-chilling effort of the old blood-curdling type, the kind that keeps the spectator thrilled from the first to the last of the picture. Mr. Morris has a role of high responsibility and acquits himself very creditably. It is different from anything he has so far essayed on the screen and speaks well for his talent and versatility. He monopolizes almost every scene in which he appears.

Una Merkel does good work and so does Gustav Von Seyffertitz, a physician who is also under suspicion. Dan Bard stands out in a mysterious role. William Bakewell, one of the stars in the memorable "All's Quiet on the Western Front," has the romantic lead opposite Miss Merkel.

The cast is an unusually well chosen and notable, which helps to make this play highly entertaining. At the climax, Mr. Morris makes an informal appearance to ask that the audience please keep the secret of the Bat's identity from those who have not yet seen the picture. It is an United Artists feature.

* * * *

Germany and France are represented in current films this week on Broadway. In French comes the dialogue picture, "Le Petit Cafe," featuring Maurice Chevalier and his wife, Yvonne Vallee. The English edition of this picture was called the "Playboy of Paris." It is entertaining throughout, since it brings out the personality of Chevalier, who plays the leading role of Albert, the waiter, who successfully woos the cafe proprietor's daughter, who is none other than the fair Yvonne.

* * * *

German's contribution is a Bavarian "Taming of the Shrew." Under the title, "Gretel and Liesel," the Germans give vent to a healthy rowdy comedy. Henny Porten plays a dual role, and exceptionally well, of the two leading characters. These are two sisters, as unlike as chalk and cheese, for one, Gretel, is a dainty, flower-like maiden, while her sister, Liesel, is shrewdish in temperament and ludicrous in appearance. In depicting the latter, Fraulien Porten does a fine bit of clowning.

The story tells of these two sisters who operate a beer garden in Oberammergau. There, in addition to serving the beer, they offer entertainment. This brings out an entertainment of beer-drinking, cowbells, singing as absurd, peasant-like characters carouse through the plot. The broadness of accent is typically Bavarian and provides good fun. The twist in the plot comes when Gretel, and Toni, the barber. By a bit of intrigue, Pepi finds himself married to Liesel, the shrew. After a brief process of subjugation, the shrew turns out to be a lovable and obedient Frau.

If you want a touch of old-country atmosphere, these scenes in the beer garden and village atmosphere are true to life and at the same time delightfully refreshing.

Government Investigation Proceeds of Famous Players Canadian Corp.

Prosecutions to Follow Decision On Combine Act, As Upheld by Privy Council

THOUSANDS of pages of evidence have been secured in connection with the Government Investigation of the Famous Players Canadian Corp., and its subsidiaries. A further probe will involve the interrogation of exhibitors throughout the Dominion, past and present theatreowners.

The experience of exhibitors with arbitration under the "standard contract," and the circumstances under which they leased their theatres, or entered into operating agreements with the Famous Players.

While all this information is of tremendous importance in the establishment of the existence of a Combine, what climaxes all the operations of the Famous Players Canadian is the power, as vested in a Trust, or controlling interest, to sell out the Canadian interests to Paramount-Publix. It would be difficult to find more direct evidence of a misuse of power, of mismanagement, of violation of trust, of a breach of prospectus under which shares were sold to the Canadian public, than is evident in what transpired when Paramount-Publix secured the control of the Famous Players Canadian.

Those involved, in this violation of a Trust Agreement, must have had no sense of their obligation to their investors, or they must have felt pretty secure from prosecution, or they would not have proceeded with the Americanization of a Canadian Film Enterprise, in direct violation of a Trust Agreement.

It will be necessary for the directors to show cause for refusing a cash offer of \$75.00 a share from a British Film company, a later \$60.00 cash per share offer from a Canadian syndicate, for an exchange of shares on a basis of five shares of Famous Players, for an exchange of four shares of Paramount-Publix.

Should the Government Investigation proceed to extend its inquiry into how the Famous Players passed into the control of Paramount-Publix, since an investigation is now being made of the manner in which other theatres passed into the control of Famous-Players, it will uncover evidence here which will at least prove illuminating to 4,000 shareholders of the Famous Players Canadian Corp., hundreds of whom gave up the voting rights of their shares to a Trust, under an agreement that the company should remain under Canadian control for a period of ten years.

The Hon. C. H. Cahan has ordered an investigation of the Yukon Consolidated Gold Corp., Limited, because of alleged mismanagement. Would it be termed good management on the part of the directors of the Famous Players Canadian, not to have taken advantage of a cash offer for the shares of the company, when these shares had attained a peak price, to later exchange these shares, for shares in an American company, precipitating the Canadian shareholders into the dangers of a falling American market; and despite the voiced and united protests of 800 shareholders, who held approximately 100,000 shares of Famous Players Canadian?

The minority shareholders lost millions of dollars, while the directors, who manipulated the deal had nothing to lose, for Mr. Adolph Zukor had already pocketed \$8,000,000 for himself and his company, in addition to getting the company back. Mr. I. W. Killam had pro-

tected himself; and the other directors, manipulating the deal, had sold their shares, long, long ago!

If this deal is uncovered by a Government Investigation, we may get an opportunity to discover why the "rich grow richer, and the poor grow poorer," and why the Minority Shareholder is the External Boob in the manipulation of Controlling Interests!

A special cable to The Toronto Star, from its London correspondent, reports on the finding of the British Privy Council, as follows:

"London, Jan. 29.—The judicial committee of the British Privy Council today rendered a judgment of far-reaching importance, when it pronounced the Combines Investigation Act of Canada valid, and also upheld Section 498 of the Canadian Criminal Code, both of which measures had been challenged by the Proprietary Articles Trade Association, and by the Attorneys-General of Ontario and Quebec. Their appeal from the judgment of the Supreme Court of Canada is dismissed.

The judgment said that in their Lordships' opinion Section 498 of the criminal code and the greater part of the Combines Investigation Act fall within the power of the Dominion Government to legislate as to matters falling within the class of subjects in the criminal law, "including the procedure in criminal matters."

The substance of the Act, the judgment continued, is to define and to make criminal combines which the legislature in the public interest intends to prohibit. The definition is wide and may cover activities which have not hitherto been considered criminal.

"But only those combines are affected, which have operated or are likely to operate to the detriment or against the interest of the public." And if parliament genuinely determines that commercial activities which can be so described are to be suppressed in the public interest, then their Lordships see no reason why parliament should not make them crimes.

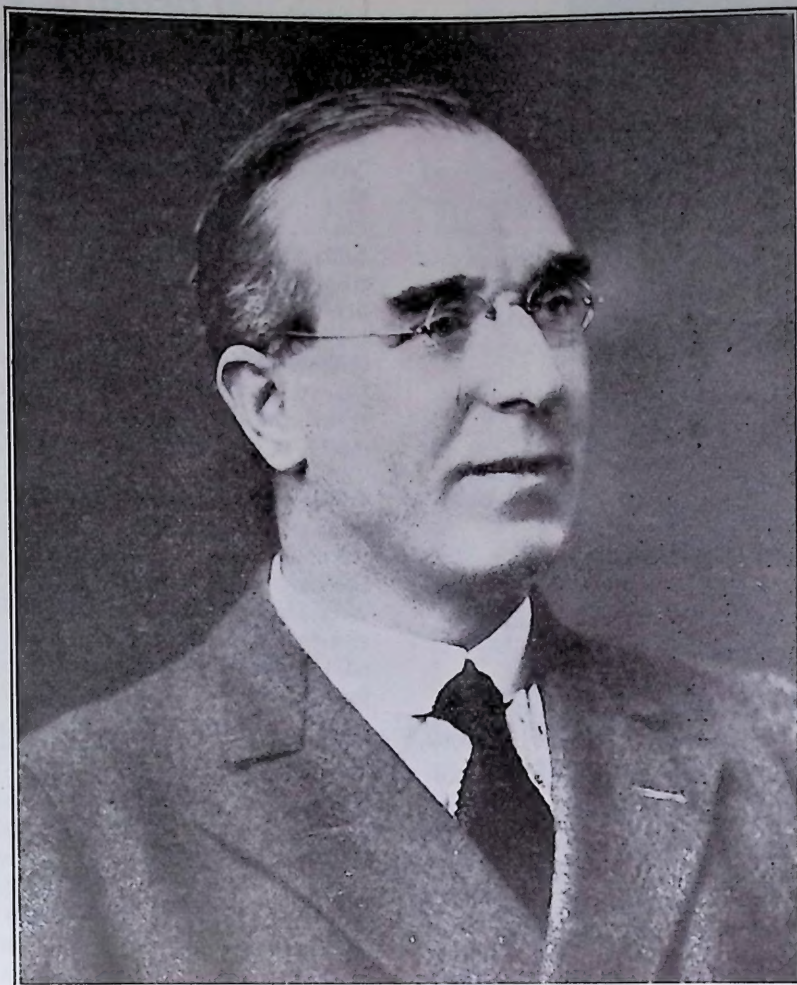
May Define New Crimes.

The criminal law, the judgment went on, is certainly not confined to what was criminal by the law of England or of any province in 1867, when Confederation came about. The power must extend to legislation to make definitions of new crimes.

It is not enough, however, for parliament to rely solely on its powers to legislate as to criminal law, the judgment added. The remedies given under Sections 29 and 30, reducing the customs duty and revoking the patents, have no necessary connection with criminal law. Their Lordships have no doubt that they can both be supported as being reasonably ancillary to the powers given respectively under Section 91.

The judgment declared it is unfortunately beyond dispute that in a country where a general protective tariff exists, persons may be found to take advantage of the protection and within its walls form combinations that may work to the public disadvantage.

It is an elementary point of self-preservation that a legislature which creates protection should arm the executive with powers for relaxing the protection if it is abused, the judgment declared."



JOHN MAXWELL

Chairman, British International Pictures, Limited.

"Young Woodley" at The Uptown

YOUNG WOODLEY," a British International feature picked up the business of the Uptown Theatre, Toronto, this week in great style. It is a most unusual picture, because it is perhaps the closest screen presentation to The Drama, which Talking Pictures has yet given us. The characters, all of them, from the headmaster down to the school boys, do not only move and speak, but they live, not only upon that screen, but they walk right out of that screen, into your home, having entrenched themselves as permanent personalities!

The story gives us a glimpse of school life in England, it might be in Canada, or the United States, but for the English atmosphere and country. A private school with boys living in residence. Just the normal type of a boy, the one who loves to "rag;" and the dreamers, great on tradition, great on ideals, sensitive, emotional, and glimpsing their first experiences with Life, where Dad's money will not buy what they desire; and desire becomes baffled, and crushed under defeat.

Our hero, "Young Woodley," is the idealist, who becomes aware of the fact that he loves the wife of the headmaster, a pretty young woman, a most excellent interpretation, who is quite out of harmony, as far as being in the environment in which she finds herself. The Chastisement of Fire, if we may be permitted to call this love ordeal by such a poetical reference, is harder on the boy than on the woman, but the boy leaves the

school leaving us with the impression that he will "Make the Grade;" and the woman remains with her headmaster husband, leaving us also with the impression that she will "play the game."

It's great stuff, real entertainment. One of the best Talking Pictures I have ever seen; and a decided acquisition to the screen. "Young Woodley" is one of "The Imperial Eight," which Regal Films is offering. It is a sure bet for any house; and sets a pace for all around quality difficult to reach, and most difficult to surpass.

Of "The Imperial Eight" I have also witnessed "Night Birds" in London, England; and "The Man From Chicago."

You will agree with me, when you have an opportunity to see these three pictures, that they establish a precedent for quality among any group offered, and I understand the other five of "The Imperial Eight" are equally as good. If this is so, I have not seen the others, let it here be recorded that British International Pictures, through Regal Films, is the first company to offer a group of eight pictures of such equal standard of quality and of such consistent quality. It means a new era for group-buying in motion pictures. It means eight good pictures, all good, all very good, and as a result a good market for British Films.

—EDITOR.



J. H. COLEMAN, B.A., Sc.
Coleman Electric Company.

Born 1888, near Collingwood, Ontario. Obtained education in Public Schools, Collingwood and Barrie Collegiate Institutes, Barrie Model School. Taught school for two years, entering Electrical Engineering Course, Toronto University in 1909, graduating with degree of Bachelor of Applied Science in 1913. Took position with Toronto Electric Light Co. as Illuminating Engineer upon graduation, for two years, at the same time entering the Moving Picture field as operator at the Teck Theatre, Toronto. Became associated with Charles Potter Company, Toronto, for one year, handling Lantern Department and Theatre Supplies, sold first machine, a Simplex, to Russ Gregory of Acton. Took on Toronto Branch Managership of Perkins Electric Co., then at 11 Temperance Street for three years, then embarked in business for himself, which business he now continues to conduct very successfully. Attributes success to honest policy. Takes up Photography and Electronic Emission as hobbies, is an Anglican Church member, and a good Showman.

Marco To Succeed Roxy

Marco Wolf, more commonly known as Marco of Fanchon and Marco, is to succeed Mr. S. A. Rothafel (Roxy) as managing director of the Roxy Theatre, New York City, it is understood. Roxy has arranged with the board of directors of the Roxy Theatre Corporation to have his contract terminated on March 29th, 1931. It is expected that Mr. Rothafel, after making an eight weeks' tour of the country with his famous radio "gang" will become associated with R. C. A. interests.

52 Features M-G-M

It was reported to the trade by Nicholas Schenck that fifty-two features would comprise M-G-M's 1931 schedule. Mr. Schenck stated that colour would only be used very occasionally in these films, and that no wide film pictures are being planned.

Toronto Theatres

LOEW'S—Manager Jules Bernstein—A Metro-Goldwyn Mayer picture, featuring Joan Crawford in "Paid." Miss Crawford is the young girl who is sent to prison, by an over-righteous employer, for something she did not do. After coming out of jail she tries to go straight, but finds it impossible as she cannot get any work, so she joins a gang of crooks, where she quickly becomes the brains of the gang. Kent Douglas is the young son of her former employer, whom she marries for revenge. Robert Armstrong is the hard-boiled crook, who is in love with Joan, and in order to save her from a prison term confesses to a murder and is sent to the electric chair. The picture is great drama, with a very good cast.

UPTOWN—Manager Tom Daley—"Young Woodley," a British International picture with Frank Lawton, Madeleine Carroll and Sam Livesey. Young Woodley, the hero of the picture, falls in love with his headmaster's wife, who returns his affections. The headmaster becomes aware of the situation and the boy is taken out of College. The acting, throughout the picture, is very good. Direction by Thomas Bentley.

TIVOLI—Manager Jimmy Lynch—Emil Jannings and Marlene Dietrich in "The Blue Angel," a UFA picture. Emil Jannings is the college professor who falls in love with a dance hall girl, and on this account is asked to resign from the college. He marries her and becomes the clown of the company she is travelling with. He goes mad during the performance, when they are booked to play in his old home town. In the end he goes up to his old class room and falls dead on the desk. It is melodrama directed by Joseph Von Sternberg, and marvellously acted.

IMPERIAL—Manager H. V. Knevels — "The Royal Family of Broadway," starring Ina Claire, Mary Brian and Frederic March. It is the story of the inherent love of a family for the stage, and no matter how hard they try to break away from it, they always come back. The picture is most entertaining, and the acting excellent.

SHEA'S—Manager Jerry Shea—A Paramount Picture, "Fast and Loose," featuring three stage stars, Charles Starrett, Henry Wadsworth, and Winifred Harris. The theme is centred around the love of a society girl for a garage mechanic. It is an excellent comedy.

M-G-M Has Three of Ten Best

For the second successive year, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer has led all competitors in the annual film critics poll, conducted by the Film Daily.

Among the ten best pictures of 1930, selected by motion picture critics throughout the country, three are Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer productions. These are "The Big House," "Anna Christie," and "The Divorcee." The nearest competing company has two productions, while other companies have placed one each on this list, considered as an authoritative expression of the year's outstanding films.

In the list of best pictures for 1929, four were Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer productions. This provides the striking record of seven out of the best twenty motion pictures of the past two years for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, or more than a third of the entire group for these two seasons.

Jesse Lasky States Hollywood Makes Too Many Pictures

"Hollywood makes too many pictures," Jesse Lasky, producer, told members of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences at a meeting Wednesday. "So many theatres have to be kept supplied with changing programs that the total income isn't large enough to stand the negative costs of the individual pictures." There aren't enough good stories in the world to supply the annual demand, he asserted, declaring that whereas a stage producer need only present one to five plays a year, the motion picture producer must meet release dates with a production a week."

Lasky was one of four contributors to a symposium conducted by the Art and Technique Committee of the Academy. It was the first of a series at which the 600 leading actors, directors, producers, technicians and writers who make up the Academy will discuss art and technique problems in the furtherance of better sound and talking picture quality.

Maritime Film Board Has Elections

Mr. R. G. Martin has been elected President of the Maritime Film Board of Trade. Mr. Martin was the first President of this group when it was formed several years ago. Mr. P. J. Hogan is the new Vice-President, and Mr. W. A. Sault, Treasurer. The Executive Secretary of the Board is Miss Alice Fairweather.

A vote of thanks was given to the retiring officers, after which Miss Fairweather read the annual report which reviewed the events of the past year, showing the great success made by the Board. A telegram was received from Col. Cooper of Toronto, President of the Motion Picture Distributors and Exhibitors of Canada, in which he wished the Board every success for the year of 1931-32.

Talking Pictures for Aylmer, Ont.

The Capitol Theatre, Aylmer, Ont., has been closed in order to make extensive alterations, and to instal a talking picture machine. Mr. Ed. Johnson, manager of the Capitol Theatre, has bought the theatre building, and says that the house is to have all up-to-date equipment, and is going to show only the very best pictures.

United Artists Picture for Broadway

United Artists, with four pictures on Broadway — "Reaching For The Moon" at the Criterion, "Devil To Pay" at the Gaiety, "The Bat Whispers" at the Rivoli and "One Heavenly Night" at the Rialto — looks ahead to four more en route. Charlie Chaplin's "City Lights" comes to the Cohan February 6. And it is now announced that two \$2 pictures, "Hell's Angels" and "Abraham Lincoln," are soon to have their first popular-priced showings. "Hell's Angels" will follow "Fighting Caravans" at the Rialto and "Abraham Lincoln" comes to the Rivoli in February, possibly in time for Lincoln's Birthday.

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Show Business



(Special to Digest from Ottawa)

In line with the general policy of theatres in Montreal of offering double-feature programs, the Capitol Theatre, owned by Famous Players Canadian Corp., has discontinued Publix stage shows and has adopted the plan of double bills. The first two-in-one program comprised "The Laughing Lady" and "Tol'able David." The house orchestra has been dropped and the admission scale had been reduced to 60c top. The Montreal Capitol is one of the largest theatres in Canada.

Ernie Marks, pioneer Canadian showman and proprietor of Martin's Theatre, is now Mayor Marks of Oshawa, having been elected to office over two other aspirants. For two score years at least, Ernie was a member of the historic Marks Bros. Stock Company which travelled the highways and byways of the whole Dominion, presenting a repertoire of dramatic plays and variety turns. When the tours finally terminated, he acquired the independent moving picture house in Oshawa where he competes with the Regent, a Famous Players' theatre.

The Ontario censors washed out "Free Love" as the title of the Universal production but approved the feature under the name of "The Modern Wife."

The Montreal Trust Company, acting for Famous Players Canadian Corp., has entered action against the City of Montreal for \$42,000 damages for alleged encroachment on a downtown property which is being held for a theatre site. The city took a small strip at the rear for a lane. Famous Players has asked damages or the return of the disputed portion and court costs.

Fillman and Moorehead, independent chain operators in Western Ontario, have invaded Ottawa, having linked up with A. H. and S. Coplan, owners of the Princess Theatre, in a plan to erect an attractive film house on Rideau Street in the Canadian Capital, it is announced, construction to start immediately.

By doing so, Fillman and Moorehead come into direct conflict with an independent Ottawa group which has also laid plans for the erection of a Rideau Street theatre within the next three months. The Ottawa syndicate comprises P. J. Nolan, owner of the Avalon, Remy and Columbia Theatres; Donat Paquin, owner of the Francais Theatre, Ottawa, and the Laurier Theatre, Hull, and Don Stapleton of the Centre Theatre, it is stated.

Fillman and Moorehead have theatres in Brampton, London, St. Thomas, Orillia and other cities of Western Ontario. Their appearance in Ottawa will lead to a theatre war, it is promised.

An important conference of the National Council of Women, with delegates from all parts of the Dominion, will be held in Ottawa on February 4 and 5 when, with the co-operation of Col. John A. Cooper, president of the Motion Picture Distributors of Canada, a National Film Advisory Board will be formed for the purpose of aiding the Hays' Organization in the raising of film standards. A resolution to this effect has already been prepared and the move possesses the appearance of permanency.

The conference will also ask the Canadian Government to create a National Board of Moving Picture Censors for a Federal system of censorship to replace the present chain of Provincial censor boards across Canada which are said to be variable, expensive and inconvenient.

Waiving of amusement tax in connection with blind people attending picture shows on special passes issued by the Canadian Famous Players Corporation is the request which has been received for consideration by the city council of Saskatoon. The request comes from the Canadian National Institute for the Blind.

(Special to The Digest from Winnipeg)

A western Canadian theatre will receive wheat as cash!

Announcement was made this week by Charles Hanson, manager of Empress Theatre at Lethbridge, Alta., that one bushel of wheat will admit one person to a regular show at the theatre from now on, and farmers are encouraged to throw a few sacks of wheat in the car and take the family to the show.

If the wheat is properly sacked it has a monetary value of 55 cents at the Empress, which sum includes the price of admission and tax. Thirty-five cents is the price set on a bushel of barley and 25 cents for oats, permitting patrons to witness performances at the theatre for almost every variety of grain.

An organized effort is being made all through Canada, in the west as well as the east, to secure a wider showing of British made films. The United States industry has a strangle-hold in the west, due to its ownership of the larger theatres in the chief centres.

Announcement is made of the organization of the British Films Guild in Canada, an independent organization of Canadian theatrogoers, interested in seeing British and Canadian pictures in Canadian theatres. The guild has an initial membership of 150 people and is now conducting a mail poll for the election of officers.

Believing the vagueness surrounding specific activities of British studios, the personalities of stars and directors, what British films are currently available for Canadian showings, and how they appeal to Canadian tastes to be one of the major handicaps to British films progress in Canada, the guild hopes to act as a clearing house for information, the announcement said.

Its appointees will review incoming British films and send frank comments to the membership at large.

Members as a whole will report on British films they see and a summarized symposium of Canadian opinion will be sent to the British producer for his information as an indication of Canadians' film entertainment. Statistics on British films will be compiled with a notation of where they were shown, audience reactions and degree of box office success in each case. Co-operation of British producers in such things as arranging previews has, it is stated, been obtained.

Round About the Studios



A charming study of Norma Shearer, beautiful Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer star. After an absence from the screen for several months, Norma is now rehearsing her new picture, "Strangers May Kiss."

Norma Shearer will display another gorgeous wardrobe of new creations in "Strangers May Kiss," her new Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer starring vehicle. Gilbert Adrian is designing the costumes for the picture.

Another welcome addition to the list of British talkie comedies is promised in "East Lynne on the Western Front" which now approaches completion at the Gaumont Studios.

"The Bridegroom's Widow," British International picture which is being directed by Richard Eichberg in both English and German, is now in full swing.

The biggest news story of the week in motion picture circles was the one to the effect that Warner Bros. had signed a long term starring contract with Ruth Chatterton. The story coming in the form of an official statement from Warner Bros. created a vast amount of interest, Miss Chatterton being looked upon as one of the foremost figures on the screen at the present time.

Edward Dean Sullivan has completed the script for "X Marks the Spot," Tiffany's forthcoming special.

"Indiscretion" is the title of Gloria Swanson's next United Artists Picture, not "Obey That Impulse!" because that first title did not suggest the drama which is the basis of the story.

This film is being made at the United Artists Studio; previously Miss Swanson's pictures were filmed at the Pathe Studio.

"An Anonymous Letter" and "A Bank Swindle" are two new subjects in the Educational - William J. Burns Detective Mysteries, scheduled for early release.

Pathe handed Eddie Quillan a new contract this week when the youthful comedian arrived at the Culver City Studios following a personal appearance tour in the East in connection with showings of his latest starring vehicle, "Big Money."

Helen Chandler, who has appeared during the past season in "Salute," "Mother's Boy" and other screen vehicles, has been chosen for the feminine lead opposite Ramon Novarro in "Daybreak," soon to get under way at the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studio.

Edmund Breese and "Vivi" have been added to the cast of Columbia Pictures' stirring post drama of gangland and the modern racketeer, "The Last Parade." Erle C. Kenton is directing and an imposing cast includes Jack Holt and Tom Moore, teamed for the featured male roles and Constance Cummings, new Columbia discovery in the leading feminine part.

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer has acquired motion picture rights to "Stepping Out," the play by Elmer Harris which was presented by Charles Dillingham at the Fulton Theatre.

The cast of the stage production was headed by Grace LaRue, Walter Connolly and Martha Sleeper, while selection of players for the screen adaptation has not yet been announced.



Scene from "Wizardland," one of Pathe's Vagabond Adventure Series.

Warner Bros. made the official announcement last week that they had signed William Powell to a long term starring contract. The actor, who is now in Hollywood at another studio, will leave at once for a vacation of two months. Upon his return everything will be in readiness for the production of his first picture in the Warner Studios.

The Monta Bell story which has been called "Fires of Youth" in the Universal studios since it went into production, has been changed in title to "Up For Murder." Lew Ayres is starred, with Genevieve Tobin, Dorothy Peterson, Freddy Burke Fredericks, Betty Jane Graham, Aileen Manning, Louise Beavers, Purnell B. Pratt, Tom Jensen, Jessie Perry, Frederick Burt in the cast.

James Hanley has written a special number for Fifi Dorsay to sing in the El Brendel picture, "Mr. Lemon of Orange," produced by the Fox Film Corporation. It is titled, "My Racket Is You." In the story Brendel plays the dual role of a toy salesman and a gangster.

"Babe" London, who has undisputed claim to the title of being "the fattest actress in motion pictures," is the latest cinema celebrity to be cast for "Daybreak," the new Ramon Novarro picture at M-G-M.

"I'm working so steadily I'm afraid I'll get thin!" mourned the 266 pound beauty. "Babe" had added weight and comedy values to a long series of film successes, including "New Moon," the Tibbett-Moore vehicle, and the Dressler-Moran comedy, "Reducing."

Jacques Feyder is the director of "Daybreak."

Marion Shilling, who plays 'opposite Lew Cody in one of the sequences of "Beyond Victory," has been signed by Pathe to a long-term contract as a result of her excellent work in this all-star special in which Bill Boyd heads the cast.

"Not Exactly Gentlemen" is the final title of the Fox Film, "3 Rough Diamonds." The nearly gentlemen are Victor McLaglen, Lew Cody and Eddie Gribbon, adventurers capable of getting their man but not of holding their women.

Charles Winninger, well known Broadway comedian, has been signed by Carl Laemmle, Jr., for an important role in "Gambling Daughters," the Booth Tarkington story which Hobart Henley is directing at Universal City. Winninger created the role of Cap'n Andy Hawks in the Ziegfeld stage production of "Show Boat." Others in the cast of "Gambling Daughters" are Conrad Nagel, Sidney Fox, Bette Davis, Emma Dunn, Humphrey Bogart, Bert Roach, Slim Summerville and David Durand.

Director Seymour Felix practically cornered the juvenile and ingenue market in Hollywood when he was casting for the Fox picture, "Girls Demand Excitement." Virginia Cherrill, Marguerite Churchill, Marion Byron and Addie McPhail are the ingenues. John Wayne, William Janney, Terrence Ray, and Eddie Nugent are the outstanding juveniles in the cast.



Lawrence Tibbett, Metropolitan star, whose next picture for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer is "The Southerner."

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